

[*For Private Circulation.*]

We testify to the need of this charity, and believe that the money given to it, is faithfully and judiciously expended.

F. BERLIN, Resident Physician of N. E. Hospital for Women and Children.
W. L. RICHARDSON, Visiting Physician of the Boston Lying-In Hospital.
CHARLES P. PUTNAM, Physician of Mass. Infant Asylum.

REPORT OF AID

GIVEN TO

DESTITUTE MOTHERS AND INFANTS.

It is now three years and a half since we began our work. As we have frequently been asked to explain its object, we quote a portion of the appeal printed for private circulation nearly three years ago:—

“ Every year a number of women are admitted to the maternity hospitals who, when the time comes for them to leave with their infants, have no home nor friends to go to, and no money to live upon. The regular price of good and healthful board for an infant is \$3.00 a week,*—the average wages of a competent female servant, leaving no margin for clothes and incidental expenses. Moreover, some of these women are not strong enough, when discharged from the hospitals, to go immediately to hard work, without serious and permanent injury to their health. A small fund, to pay the board of such women during convalescence, and until they are strong enough to work, is very much needed.

“ Very many infants — but only a few, when compared with the number that need assistance — are taken in by the infant asylums and homes for the orphan and destitute children; but these institutions are overwhelmed with applications, and are only to a limited extent able to relieve the great suffering that exists. A little temporary help, given to industrious, deserving mothers, who beg

* For a child a year old, or over, the price of board is less,—usually \$2.50, or \$2.00 a week.

that some way may be found to save them from parting with their children, would save numbers of infants from a death of lingering misery.

“ The situation of these poor, helpless women and infants is so desperate, that many benevolent persons, on first coming in contact with them, feel nothing but hopelessness. To afford permanent relief appears to be out of the question. But it has been found by experience, that a small sum, judiciously expended, will often raise these forlorn creatures from starvation and despair, to a situation of comfort and security.

“ There is another class of mothers by whom assistance is equally needed, both for their own sake and that of their infants. These are the unmarried women. We are not speaking of depraved women. For such there are other charities, other helps. The women for whom we ask assistance are generally motherless girls, living at service, or in working-people’s boarding-houses. Unless some help is extended, mother and child must part, never to meet again in the world. The mother is beset by all the perils and temptations which assail a young, poor, and friendless woman, especially one who has already taken the first step on the downward path; but she is deprived of her best safeguard, — the loving care she bestowed on her child, and the holy and purifying influence of its innocence and helplessness.”

To meet the want above described is the object of this charity. It, therefore, includes: —

1st. The personal and careful investigation of the circumstances of each woman that applies for help, usually sent to us by the physicians of the N. E. Hospital for Women, or the physicians of the Boston Lying-In Hospital, but sometimes coming to our knowledge in other ways.

2d. Visiting these patients during the time preceding their admission to the hospitals and subsequent to their discharge.

3d. The care and supervision of the infants of the mothers assisted, including the selection of good boarding-places and the visiting of the infants thus placed at board.

The money given to us is expended in the following ways : —

1st. In paying the board of destitute women for a short period previous to their admission to the hospitals.

2d. In paying the board of both mother and infant during a brief period of convalescence after their discharge from the hospitals.

3d. In assisting those mothers who earn low wages to pay the board of their infants.

We are sometimes asked if our work is not the same with that of some long-established institutions which have already received the interest and gained the confidence of the community. Our work, however, differs essentially from that of any institution with which we are acquainted. We gladly recognize the earnestness and faithfulness of the workers in other charities on behalf of the destitute and the fallen ; but differing, as to our objects, from some, and as to our methods, from others, we feel that our work covers a portion of the field not otherwise provided for.

We hear it sometimes questioned whether an unmarried mother has any strong love for her child. We are able, from personal observation, to testify to this love in many cases ; and we are thereby led to feel that in helping to preserve unbroken this relationship, we are co-workers with the Providence which created this love, and placed it in the heart of the mother, for its own wise purposes. If circumstances force a separation, the danger to the mother, of a relapse into sin, is very much increased ; especially when she is not guarded and supported by friendship and sympathy. The best thing that can be done for these mothers is to find them situations in families, usually in the country, where, in consideration of a reduction in wages, the child is allowed to remain with the mother. Such arrangements we are sometimes able to make ; and letters received from employers testify to the gratifying result of this experiment. It is not often, however, that we are fortunate enough to obtain such situations, and the infant must then be placed at board sufficiently near the mother to allow her to visit it once a week.

Our expenses have been somewhat heavier than usual this year, as we have helped a larger number of women. It will be noticed

that this increase in number is among the married women chiefly. Last year we had but twenty-two married women. This year the number of married women helped is thirty-nine. Sixty-two unmarried women were helped last year, and this year sixty-five. The unusual difficulty in obtaining work during the past year, will account for this increase in the number of persons needing our help.

We may here state that of the unmarried women assisted during the three and a half years of our work, a large number have done very well. Only a very few have disappointed us by a relapse into wrong-doing; and of these, all but one were deprived of their infants, either by death or separation. We, therefore, apply once more to our friends for the means of keeping this tie between mother and child unbroken; and would implore all who have it in their power, to aid us by finding situations where mother and child may receive a home together.

We subjoin a brief statement of a few of the cases assisted, thinking they may have some interest for our readers. Those mentioned are all unmarried women:—

A was sent to us in December, 1876; totally friendless; twenty-two years old; a frail, delicate woman: took a situation in a family who lived a short distance out of town, her child being placed at board in Boston. She suffered so much from the separation from her child, that she induced the family who had taken him to board, to allow her to board with them also; and she supported herself and child, without any help, for about eight months, working by day in a hotel, and coming home at night to be with her child. Her health finally became injured by hard work, and we paid her board for a time, to allow her to rest and recover strength. This was painful to her, as she wished to support herself wholly. She is now stronger, and anxious to earn the living of herself and child.

B was sent to us three years since; seventeen years old; father had been dead many years; mother kept a boarding-house at the north end of Boston; a very harsh, unkind woman; refused to give B any help whatever. We paid her board for a

time, and she then obtained a situation as wet nurse, supporting her child wholly. She remains with the same family as nursery maid, giving perfect satisfaction, and is a modest, refined and pleasing girl. (It should be stated that B had not been brought up by her mother).

C was sent to us a little more than two years ago; seventeen years old; parents both living in the British Provinces; but C had lived for two years at service in Boston, and had not seen them during that time. Her employer took very little interest in her. We helped her for a time, and finally an aunt took home both C and the child.

D was sent to us a little more than a year ago; father dead; mother an invalid; cannot read nor write. We paid her board for a time, and she then obtained a situation as wet nurse, supporting her child wholly. She remains in the same family, and gives satisfaction.

E also came to us about a year ago; sixteen years old; mother dead; father living; but has had nothing to do with her for several years. Worked for her board in a poor family. Cannot read nor write with ease. We paid her board for a time, and then the family where she had lived received both her and her child.

F was sent to us about three years ago. Her child was then about six months old. F was twenty-one years old. Rather than part from her child, even for a time, she took a situation in a household where she engaged to do all the work of the family for her own and her child's board, without wages. This included the whole care of a young, sick infant, whose mother had lately died. She stayed some time in this household, and afterwards was employed by two different families. In one she received low wages, and in the other worked for her board. She saved almost every cent she earned, to pay a debt contracted while she was out of work. After about a year she finally married the father of her child,—the child being then about eighteen months old.

It should be borne in mind that the above are not *exceptional* cases, but fair specimens of a large number. We do not mention

any of those which have come under our notice very recently,
since they have not yet stood the test of time.

For the visitors.

MRS. WILLIAM BRADLEY,

MRS. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

FEB. 6, 1878.

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----|---------------------------------|
| Married women assisted, | 39 | NATIONALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN. |
| Unmarried " " | 65 | |
| Whole number assisted, | 104 | Irish, 22 |
| Assisted with money, | 98 | American, 11 |
| " without money, | 6 | German, 2 |
| | 104 | English, 1 |
| | | Scotch, 1 |
| | | Nova Scotia, 1 |
| | | French Canadian, 1 |
| | | — 39 |
| AGE OF UNMARRIED WOMEN. | | |
| 16 years old, | 4 | NATIONALITY OF UNMARRIED WOMEN. |
| 17 " 1 | | |
| 18 " 6 | | |
| 19 " 16 | | |
| 20 " 4 | | |
| 21 " 3 | | |
| 22 " 13 | | |
| 23 " 4 | | |
| 24 " 3 | | |
| 25 " 6 | | |
| Over 25, 4 | | |
| Unknown, 1 | | |
| — 65 | | — 65 |

RECEIVED JAN. 1st, 1877, TO JAN.
1st, 1878.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| On hand Jan 1st, 1877, | \$53.27 |
| Miss Helen Ames, | 50.00 |
| Miss Ellen Bancroft, | 5.00 |
| Miss Mary E. Bayley, | 40.00 |
| Mrs. William Bradley, | 3.00 |
| Rev. Phillips Brooks, | 25.00 |
| Mrs. Dr. Cabot, | 5.00 |
| Miss C. H. Clarke, | 5.00 |
| Eliot C. Clarke, | 10.00 |
| Miss L. Clarke, | 10.00 |
| T. C. Clarke, | 10.00 |
| James Freeman Clarke, | 100.00 |
| Mrs. T. Jefferson Coolidge, | 20.00 |
| Mrs. C. P. Curtis, | 25.00 |
| Miss May Dabney, | 106.25 |
| Miss A. W. Davis, | 10.00 |
| Mrs. W. S. Dexter, | 5.00 |
| Mrs. Otto Dresel, | 20.00 |
| Mrs. James T. Fields, | 10.00 |
| Miss M. L. Goddard, | 3.00 |
| Mrs. W. B. Greene, | 200.00 |
| Mrs. A. Hemenway, | 100.00 |
| George Higginson, | 200.00 |
| Mrs. O. W. Holmes, | 5.00 |
| Miss Alice S. Hooper, | 100.00 |
| Mrs. Charles Jackson, | 20.00 |
| Miss C. T. Kirby, | 10.00 |
| Miss Rose Lamb, | 10.00 |
| Miss K. P. Loring, | 20.00 |
| Miss A. C. Lowell, | 30.00 |
| Mrs. Augustus Lowell, | 20.00 |
| Mrs. Arthur T. Lyman, | 25.00 |
| Mrs. Theodore Lyman, | 50.00 |
| Mrs. Thomas Mack, | 5.00 |
| Mrs. F. W. G. May, | 10.00 |
| Mrs. Daniel Merriman, | 10.00 |
| Mrs. E. L. Motte, | 5.00 |
| Mrs. C. J. Paine, | 30.00 |

| | |
|--|--------|
| Rev. John Parkman, | 5.00 |
| Miss M. A. Ropes, | 20.00 |
| Mrs. G. R. Russell, | 50.00 |
| Miss A. de V. Sohier, | 10.00 |
| Mrs. G. H. Shaw, | 20.00 |
| Miss Alice A. Towne, | 150.00 |
| Miss M. A. Wales, | 20.00 |
| Dr. J. C. Warren, | 5.00 |
| Dr. E. Wigglesworth, | 25.00 |
| Miss Gertrude Weld, | 4.00 |
| A Subscriber, | 250.00 |
| A Friend, | 500.00 |
| A Friend, | 30.00 |
| A Friend, | 10.00 |
| A Friend, | 10.00 |
| B. | 50.00 |
| “A lady who has read the report with much interest,” | 5.00 |
| Anonymous, | 20.00 |
| Interest on \$1000.00 bond, the gift of Mrs. W. B. Greene, | 32.00 |
| Returned by persons assisted, | 103.50 |

Total amount received. \$2,685.02

EXPENDED JAN. 1st, 1877, TO JAN.
1st, 1878.

| | |
|---|---------|
| Board of women, | 1127.52 |
| Board of infants, | 1061.87 |
| Clothing for women, | 67.97 |
| Clothing for infants, | 94.08 |
| Traveling and car fares, | 149.07 |
| Advertising, | 33.00 |
| Sundries (including soap, washing, sewing, infants' food, etc., etc., | 107.51 |
| Printing, | 20.00 |
| Paid to assistant, | 24.00 |

\$2685.02

Subscriptions may be sent to Mrs. James Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain; or to Dr. C. P. Putnam, 63 Marlboro' Street, Boston.